

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

APR 4/11/03  
RECEIVED

PATRICIA HAMAMOTO  
SUPERINTENDENT

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ADMIN & RESEARCH  
BUDGET & FINANCE

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 31, 2003

Mr. Mark Fukuhara, Administrator  
Hawaii Employer-Union Health Benefits Trust Fund  
250 S. Hotel Street, Room 106  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mr. Fukuhara:

Thank you for offering to provide additional informational sessions about the new Employer-Union Trust Fund for our teachers. It seems only logical that you provide all employees of the Department of Education (DOE) with information regarding the new health benefits program, and we have tried to assist your people in scheduling the requested informational meetings for our educational officers and their secretaries. The DOE Employee Benefits Section has been in communication with Lawrence Nishihara to assist him in arranging informational meetings.

Your request to schedule additional sessions for teachers during the month of May is not feasible at this time. May is a very busy month and teacher workshops are at a minimum if any due to the very full agendas at the school level. Teachers are winding down and working on year-end reports that have deadlines at the close of the school year. Graduation matters keep teachers very busy with activities in school and to release them for an informational meeting would hamper their effectiveness in school-related matters.

It is our understanding that the informational materials about the new health program are now being prepared for distribution to every employee as well as retirees. Although a personal presentation would provide the more compassionate approach, may it be suggested that you make your informational materials as comprehensive as possible for everyone to read and understand, and provide a way for individuals who need additional explanation to get the needed information online through your website as you had originally planned or provide a telephone hotline to address their concerns.

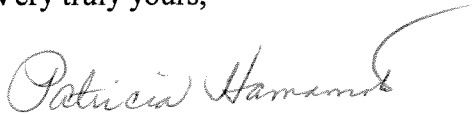
To provide release time for teachers at this time would need the approval of the teachers' union and would require a great number of substitute teachers to cover the classrooms. Also, it would be unwise for the Department to displace any already planned activity. Just as we ask our people for ample lead-time, we must respect their hard work and effort in their planning their program activities and not make changes to what we have already approved.

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May I suggest to you to arrange informational meetings for all State and County workers, including the DOE teachers, at various locations and during non-work hours so that these meetings will not disrupt the daily workers' responsibilities. Also, a presentation on Educational TV at different times will provide information to a broader audience, and tapes of this program made available for groups that want to view the program at other times would also help your program.

Lawrence Nishihara is in almost daily communication with the Employee Benefits Section, and it seems that all that can be done at this time is being addressed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia Hamamoto". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Patricia Hamamoto  
Superintendent

PH:TTY:taj

c: Office of Human Resources